

PATENT

Application No. 09/289,000
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IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please substitute the following new paragraphs in the specification (a marked-up version of the changes to the specification is attached to this Amendment):

Page 7, paragraph beginning at line 8:

Referring to Figs. 2 and 3A-3F, the present invention is directed to a method for treating a joint surface, typically an arthritic joint surface, which uses a bioresorbable implant, such as implant 23, configured for positioning between articulated joint surfaces such as the opposing surfaces of a hand (finger) joint or a shoulder joint, e.g. between a surface 20 and a resected surface 34. At least one of the joint surfaces, e.g. resected surface 34, is an exposed cancellous joint surface.

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The method of the present invention is therefore for treating at least one of two opposing, first and second, relatively movable joint surfaces by initially resecting the bone to form a cancellous bone surface. A bioresorbable implant, such as implant 23, is placed between the first and second surfaces to space them apart. The implant has at least one face which is opposite and shaped complementary to the opposing bone surface so that the implant can slidably move relative to the at least one of the first and second surfaces. By allowing the face of the implant to slidably move relative to the resected surface while promoting the growth of fibroblast on the cancellous surface for a sufficient time to allow the fibroblast to convert into fibrocartilage, the fibrocartilage generates a fresh, sliding joint surface. The implant maintains a spacing between the joint defining surfaces, and after the implant has resorbed, the fibrocartilage defines the joint surface.

The invention has been tested through an animal study, described below.